

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FOR NEA/EGY

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: OTRA EG
SUBJ: VISIT OF ACTION DIRECTOR BALZANO

REF: STATE 231241

1. DR. BALZANO STOPPED BY EMBASSY AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 23 JUST PRIOR TO DEPARTING FOR U.S. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR EMBASSY EXPEDITOR ASSISTANCE AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS, SAYING HIS VISIT WOULD HAVE BEEN A SHAMBLES IF EMBASSY HAD NOT STEPPED IN TO HELP. TRIP HAD BEEN HURRIEDLY ARRANGED AND HE HAD NO DESIRE TO MAKE END RUN. IN FUTURE HE AGREED TO KEEP DESK AND EMBASSY INFORMED OF HIS AGENCY'S ACTIVITIES CONCERNING EGYPT. I TOLD HIM OF LUCKY CHANCE THAT AMBASSADOR DENT'S CANCELLATION OF VISIT FOR SAME PERIOD BY SAME NUMBER OF PEOPLE HAD FREED HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS.

2. ON SUBSTANCE OF VISIT, BALZANO SAID HE HAD COME AT REQUEST OF PROFESSOR ATIF AT VIENNA CONFERENCE ON VOLUNTEERISM. PURPOSE WAS NOT TO PROPOSE PEACE CORPS OR OTHER PERSONNEL BE STATIONED IN EGYPT AND IN FACT VISIT IN MAY BE PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR DELLENBECK HAD CAUSED MISUNDERSTANDINGS WITH EGYPTIANS WHICH BALZANO HAD HAD TO CLEAR UP. HE HAD HAD USEFUL
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MEETINGS WITH MINSOCIALAFFAIRS DR. RATEB AND WITH

DR. HOMOSSANI. EGYPTIANS HAD BEEN QUITE INTERESTED IN HIS PROPOSAL THAT ACTION PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN SETTING UP VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FOR SENIOR CITIZENS TO WORK WITH METALLY RETARDED CHILDREN AND ADULTS. BALZANO, WHO IS MEMBER PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON MENTALLY RETARDED, SAID ACTION HAD ESTABLISHED EFFECTIVE PROGRAM IN THIS FIELD IN U.S. ACTION HAS BUDGET OF \$1.5 MILLION (ASIDE FROM PEACE CORPS) TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND BALZANO IS PREPARED TO USE SOME OF THESE FUNDS IN EGYPT.

3. ON HIS RETURN TO U.S. BALZANO WILL HAVE HIS STAFF DRAW UP A PROPOSAL FOR EGYPT AND ASSEMBLE PERTINENT LITERATURE. IN ABOUT SIX WEEKS TIME HE PLANS SEND PROJECT OFFICER TO EGYPT TO PRESENT PROPOSAL AND LOOK OVER MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS CENTERS AND FACILITIES. DEPENDING ON EGYPTIAN REACTION, ACTION WOULD THEN FUND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

4. I TOLD BALZANO WE WOULD BE GLAD LOOK OVER PROPOSAL WHEN IT DRAWN UP, BUT CAUTIONED HIM ABOUT FRUSTRATIONS OF DEALING WITH EGYPTIAN BUREAUCRACY AND DANGERS OF EGYPTIANS READING TOO MUCH INTO OFFER OF HELP. I ASKED BALZANO TO KEEP NEA/EGY INFORMED, ESPECIALLY OF TRAVEL PLANS OF HIS PROJECT OFFICER, WHO SHOULD COORDINATE WITH USAID/RUTH ROSSITER AFTER HIS ARRIVAL IN EGYPT. BALZANO AGREED.

5. APPRECIATE EGY'S ALERTING US TO THIS VISIT. HOPEFULLY ACTION WILL COORDINATE BETTER IN FUTURE. BALZANO PROPOSAL SOUNDS HARMLESS AND MIGHT EVEN PROVE TO BE OF VALUE.
MATTHEWS

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